AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WHOLE NO. 1106. WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., SATURDAY, JUNE 18, 1932 FRANK MORRISON, Secretary VOL. 22, NO. 15.

The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives a brief summary of important matters affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and each other information that will benefit the trade union movement.

Where liberty dwells, there is my country.—Milton.

Labor-Displacing Machinery Hits Telegraphers

Under the present form of our system for the production of wealth, labor-displacing machinery is introduced solely for the financial benefit of those who own and control industry and seek to live on dividends and interest.

"The disastrous effect of this policy on the workers is strikingly shown in the survey made by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U. S. Department of Labor of the number of Morse telegraphers' jobs destroyed by the printer telegraph.

In the larger offices the printer telegraph has enabled the employers to dismiss 50 out of every 100 telegraphers.

In addition, employers have taken advantage of the surplus of workers to substitute low-wage printer operators for the skilled Morse telegrapher. "The skill and training characteristic of Morse operators," the Bureau's report says, "are supplanted by ability simply to operate a keyboard adapted to telegraphic purposes." The result of the low plane of skill required to operate the printer telegraph and the determination of employers to use the machine for their own profit are shown by the fact that in the offices investigated by the Bureau the proportion of male operators has been reduced from about 80 per cent to about 40 per cent of the total number.

In discussing the general results on the telegraphers of the introduction of the printer telegraph the Bureau says:

"The effects of change to printer operations are by no means limited to a reduction of the number of operators otherwise necessary. Technological displacement includes, in this case, not only a decline in the number of opportunities for employment, but also other changes of considerable social importance. These are the passing of an historic type or class, the Morse telegrapher; the elimination of a long-established technique requiring highly specialized skill and training; and the supplanting of men by women.

"While Morse telegraphers have been confronting a rapid decline in the demand for their services in commercial telegraph offices, they have also encountered a decrease of opportunities for transfer to related fields, such as railroad telegraphy. At the same time, they have met several obstacles in the way of their becoming operators of printer telegraphs. The chief of these has been the rivalry of young girls expertly trained in the handling of the typewriter."

Organized labor has a positive remedy for the disastrous effects on the workers of labor-displacing machinery so poignantly described by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The remedy is that the length of the work day and work week shall be reduced in all industries as rapidly as machinery is introduced and to whatever extent may be necessary to provide jobs for all the workers.

Employers refuse quite generally to recognize this demand of Labor for the right to work. The existence of an army of over ten million unemployed does not move them to change their reactionary policy. They stick to it with the persistency that the slave owners stuck to the slave labor system in the last generation.

Ultimately the slave owners lost. Ultimately our capitalists will lose. They should learn a lesson from history.

Green Presents American Labor's Political Program to Republican National Convention

A. F. of L. Chief Asks Platform Declaration in Favor of Unlimited Right of Workers to Organize in Trade Unions, Five-Day Week, High Wages, Amendment of Antitrust Laws to Protect Labor's Rights, Federal Funds to Provide Work for Jobless and Assist Relief Agencies, Davis-Kelly Bill to Stabilize Coal Industry, Immigration Restriction, Vocational Training, Workmen's Compensation, Old-Age Security, 2.75 Per Cent Beer, Home Ownership, Income and Inheritance Taxes, Liberal Retirement Laws for Federal Employes, National Employment Service and Protection of Free Speech, Press, and Assembly—Opposes Compulsory Labor and Sales Tax.

Republican Party Convention Declarations on Labor Matters

Planks Favor Federal Loans for Unemployment Relief, High Wages, Shorter Hours of Labor, Immigration Restriction, Collective Bargaining, National Employment Service, Child Welfare Laws, Protective Labor Legislation, Home Ownership, and Free Speech, Press and Assemblage.

Chicago.—The platform adopted by the national convention of the Republican party contains the following planks on subjects of interest to the American labor movement:

Unemployment Relief

True to American traditions and principles of government the Administration has regarded the relief problem as one of State and local responsibility. The work of local agencies, public and private, have been coordinated and enlarged on a nation-wide scale under the leadership of the President.

Sudden and unforeseen emergencies such as the drought have been met by the Red Cross and the Government. The United States Public Health Service has been of inestimable benefit to stricken areas.

There has been magnificent response and action to relieve distress by citizens, organizations and agencies, public and private, throughout the country.

To provide against the possible failure of local and State agencies, the President has urged the Congress to create an emergency relief fund to be loaned temporarily to any State on a showing of actual need and temporary failure of its financial resources.

The Republican party indorses this record and policy and is opposed to the Federal Government entering directly into the field of private charity and direct relief to the individual.

Recognizing that real relief to unemployment must come through a revival of industrial activity and agriculture to the promotion of which our every effort must be directed, our party in State and Nation undertakes to do all in its power to make humanly possible to see that distress is fully relieved in accordance with American principles and traditions.

Wages

We believe in the principle of high wages.

Hours of Labor

We favor the principle of the shorter work week and shorter work day with its application to Government as well as to private employment, as rapidly and as constructively as conditions will warrant.

Home Building

We favor legislation designed to stimulate, encourage and assist in home building.

Immigration

The restriction of immigration is a Republican policy. Our party formulated and enacted into law the quota system which for the first time has made possible an orderly control of foreign immigration. Rigid examination of applicants in foreign countries has prevented the coming of criminals and other undesirable classes, while other provisions of the law have enabled the President to suspend immigration of foreign wage-earners, when otherwise it directly or indirectly, would have increased unemployment among native-born and legally resident foreign-born wage-earners in this country. As a result, immigration is now less than at any time during the past 100 years.

We favor the continuance and strict enforcement of our present laws upon this subject.

Department of Labor

We commend the constructive work of the United States Department of Labor.

Collective Bargaining

Collective bargaining by responsible representatives of employers and employes of their own choice without the interference of any one is recognized and approved.

Labor Legislation

Legislation such as laws prohibiting alien contract labor, peonage labor, and the "shanghaiing" of sailors, the eight-hour labor law on Government contracts and in Government employment; provision for railroad safety devices, of methods of conciliation, mediation and arbitration in industrial labor disputes, including the adjustment of railroad disputes, the prevention of unemployment, the compensation for injury to Government employes (the forerunner of Federal workers' compensation law), relief fund to be paid and protect labor are of Republican origin, and have had and will continue to have the unswerving support of the party.

U. S. Employment Service

We commend the constructive work of the United States Employment Service in the Department of Labor. This service was enlarged as the activities extended through an appropriation made possible by the President with the cooperation of the Congress. It has done high service for the unemployed in the ranks of civil life and in the ranks of former soldiers of the World War.

Freedom of Speech

Freedom of speech, press and assemblage, are fundamental principles upon which our form of government rests. These vital principles should be preserved and protected.

Child Welfare

The children of our Nation, our future citizens, have had the most nefarious thought of our people. Child welfare and protection has been a major effort of this Administration. The organization of the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection is regarded as one of the outstanding accomplishments of this Administration.

Welfare work in all its phases had had the support of the President and aid of the Administration. The work of organized agencies, local, State and Federal, has been encouraged and its increased impetus given by that recognition and help. We support and pledge a continuation of that policy.

Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico, being a part of the United States and its inhabitants American citizens, we believe that they are entitled to a good-faith recognition of the spirit and purpose of their organic act. We, therefore, favor the inclusion of the Island in all private and administrative measures enacted or sponsored by Congress or otherwise for the economic benefit of their fellow citizens of the mainland.

INJUNCTION AGAINST LABOR UNION DENIED

Judge Sullivan Upholds Wisconsin Anti-Injunction Law in Picketing Case—Persuading Persons to Buy Union Products Is Legal.

Milwaukee, Wis. — Circuit Judge Daniel W. Sullivan denied the petition of the Tuxenberg Baking Co. for an injunction to restrain Bakers' Union Local No. 232 from picketing the concern's place of business and soliciting patrons to stop buying the company's products.

First Case Heard

The case was the first one heard under the new Wisconsin labor code passed by the legislature in 1931, which permits the taking of oral testimony before a temporary injunction can be granted in connection with labor disputes.

The company charged that the union's plan was to force it to deal with the union relative to wages. Picketing began shortly after one of the employes quit and joined the union.

Picketing Defended

Attorney Joseph A. Padway, counsel for the Wisconsin State Federation of Labor, representing the union, claimed a strike was in force at the plant and defended the picketing under the labor code. The baking company contended there was no strike as all of the union employes were willing to work for low wages.

"The purpose of the law," Padway told Judge Sullivan, "is to give the laboring man freedom in fighting their economic battles. It endeavors to give to union employes the same privileges the capitalist employer has by virtue of his money power. It was set up to equalize the struggle."

Constitutionality Affirmed

Judge Sullivan gave judicial approval to the new code, and held that all provisions in applying it to the Tuxenberg case were constitutional. He said that under the law the pickets had the right to attempt to persuade persons to buy union-made bread, provided no force or intimidation was used.

"We are pleased at the result of the first trial of the new Wisconsin labor code," said J. J. Handley, secretary-treasurer of the Wisconsin State Federation of Labor. "We didn't expect anything else, because the matter had been discussed and considered by so many prominent lawyers that we were satisfied the law was constitutional."

Blow to Antiunion Employers

The decision of Judge Sullivan was a blow to the Milwaukee Employers' Council and affiliated groups who fought bitterly against enactment of the labor code. The organization attacked it in the State Legislature as unconstitutional and vicious.

LOW WAGES PAID LEATHER WORKERS IN MASSACHUSETTS

Hundreds of Women Receive Less Than $10 Per Week—Majority Earns Less Than $13.

Boston, Mass.—Data compiled by the Minimum Wage Commission of Massachusetts on earnings of women in Massachusetts employers owning establishments in which pocketbooks and leather goods are manufactured revealed wages which should bring the blush of shame to citizens who are interested in the welfare of women workers.

The board investigated 20 establishments employing 820 women.

Over one-half of the women earned less than $10 a week, and over three-fourths earned less than $13 a week.

In 29 establishments employing 714 women, weekly wage rates were reported. A rate of less than $13 was found for over two-thirds of the women and of less than $10 for over one-third.

Employers owning concerns in which pocketbooks and handbags are manufactured imposed the lower rates on the greatest percentage of women, over three-fourths having rates less than $13 a week and nearly one-half less than $10. Wage rates of $16 or over were reported for 119 of the 714 women.

The Minimum Wage Commission has in force minimum wage decrees covering 21 industries and occupations. The lowest wage set by any decree is $13 per week and the highest $15.40.

Hoffman, Hosiery Strike Leader, Freed on Parole

Harrisburg, Pa.—Alfred Hoffman, general organizer for the American Federation of Full Fashioned Hosiery Workers who was sentenced to a two-year prison term in Monroe county on charges growing out of the Nazareth hosiery workers in Stroudsburg, was released on parole after serving six months. Petitions for the release of prisoners were signed by Governor Pinchot and the representatives of the State Pardon Board, which held extensive hearings on the case.

Attorneys for Hoffman demanded a full pardon. The Pardon Board declined to grant this on the ground that no new evidence had been uncovered since the trial. The Pardon Board in commuting the sentence also reduced $200 the fine of $1,500 which was part of the original sentence.

NEW JERSEY LEGISLATURE BANS YELLOW DOG CONTRACT

Trenton, N. J.—The New Jersey Senate adopted the "yellow dog" contract bill, already passed by the House.

The bill voids agreements between employers and employes in which the latter stipulate that they will not join labor unions, or if they are already members that they will withdraw.

The bill was introduced by Assemblyman Edward D. Ballentine, Jr., who is a member of Newark Typographical Union.

Congressman Lewis Explains Bill to Guarantee Employment

Washington.—Representative David J. Lewis of Maryland urged favorable action on his bill to guarantee equal employment for all workers through a system of national trade associations, a commission, and would provide life and disability insurance, workmen's accident compensation, workmen's pension, and unemployment insurance.

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5-DAY WEEK NECESSARY FOR JOBLESS RELIEF

William Green Says Division of Work Is Only Way to Provide Jobs for the Unemployed—Rights of Labor Must be Recognized and Social Justice Promoted.

Chicago.—"The American Federation of Labor is appealing to the Republican party, through its Resolutions Committee, to embody in its platform certain recommendations which will bring encouragement and hope to the millions of workingmen and women who are suffering from unemployment," declared William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, in a statement regarding the labor planks which he, as the spokesman of American labor, submitted to the Resolutions Committee.

The platform hope, will be done through a strong declaration in favor of the five-day work week and an adjustment of the standards of industry to make it sufficient to take up the slack of unemployment.

Division of Available Work

"Men and women are appealing for work. The urgent economic need of the moment is to create work opportunities for those who have been forced into idleness.

"Those who have noted the trend of mechanical improvement and of the curtailment of employment in every part of the masses of the people understand full well that unemployment cannot be overcome except through an adjustment of working time, so that the amount of work available may be equitably distributed, and through the development of a buying power which corresponds with our facilities of production.

Social Justice Legislation

"The morale of millions has sunk to a low ebb. Spiritual values are depressed. What is needed is the creation of faith, confidence and vision.

"This can be more speedily done if the Platform Committee will incorporate in its platform declarations a promise and a pledge that the rights of Labor will be recognized, protected and promoted. Labor will be encouraged to organize in trade unions, free from interference, restraint or coercion of employers, in order that they may bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing for the betterment of their conditions of employment and the attainment of higher standards of living.

"In line with the progress which is taking place in the substitution of the five-day work week and shorter work day, and because we believe that the Government should lead in the inauguration of social and economic reforms and because it should be an example to a humane employer, we request that your platform declare in favor of the principle of the five-day work week and shorter work day and of its application to Government as well as private employment as rapidly and constructively as conditions will warrant and permit.

High Wages and Prosperity

"We urge that you declare in favor of the principle of high wages, and in full recognition of the gain in the daily or annual income of the working people of the United States.

Unemployment

"Labor has repeatedly recommended that Congress and the Government deal with this problem of unemployment in a practical and constructive way.

"In the opinion of Labor this can be done through the appropriation of funds by the Congress of the United States to be made available for use in the construction of public buildings, in making public improvements, in the building of roads, and in carrying forward the project of flood control and in building various other Government projects desirable of wide and extended unemployment.

"On the other hand, the Government should refrain from launching upon a public construction program when men and women are generally employed in private industry.

Unemployment Emergencies

"Unfortunately, thus far the Government has failed to adopt a scientific and systematic plan, or to make preparations for an unemployment emergency, by herein briefly outlined, providing for the use of Government funds and the expenditure of the same in furthering public works and public improvements when there is widespread unemployment throughout the land.

"We ask that your platform declare in favor of a scientific study of this subject and of the enactment of legislation which will serve as a real remedy for the relief of unemployment.

Technological Unemployment

"We urge the incorporation in the platform of a declaration in favor of a study by the Federal Government of technological unemployment and of such adjustments in working time and otherwise as may be necessary in order to provide employment opportunities for those who are displaced through the substitution of machinery and power for hand labor.

Vocational Training and Education

"We urge that your platform declare for the continuation of vocational education and training in a way that will meet the demands of technical progress.

"The readjustments for workers displaced by new machines and new processes are a serious hardship which should be balanced against the benefits to society.

"We urge the whole-hearted support to education, particularly the public school system of America, which should not be permitted to fall below its present standard of efficiency, but should be constantly improved even during the period of depression.

"Nothing could be more disastrous than to curtail the educational facilities for the present generation of young Americans.

Employment Service

"We ask that your platform declare in favor of the establishment and maintenance of an adequate and competent national employment service.

Unemployment Relief

"We urge that your platform declare in favor of the development of an adequate unemployment relief program, suitable to the needs of the unemployment situation which now prevails.

"This can be done through the appropriation of Federal funds to be used in supplementing the work of relief agencies in the towns, cities and States of the Nation.

"We suggest that provisions be made for the extension of Federal credit to towns, cities and States for the purpose of launching and carrying forward public improvement projects and building construction.

Immigration

"Wage earners were the first group to recognize the necessity for a controlled immigration, policy.

"The Republican platform declaration in favor of the amendment of the Volstead Act so as to provide for the manufacture and sale of beer containing 2.75 per cent alcohol by weight.

Home Owning and Home Building

"We urge you to declare in favor of legislation which will encourage, encourage and assist in home building.

"We urge that a fund similar to the fund administered by the Reconstruction Corporation be created for the purpose of extending credit through authorized channels to home owners who are threatened with the loss of homes partly paid for, during periods of distress and of unemployment.

Maintain Estate Tax

"The workers of our Nation favor graduated income taxes, and inheritance taxes and vigorously oppose the sales tax and all other tax legislation which would operate to place the burden of taxation upon those least able to bear it.

"We hold that the perpetuation of large fortunes through the creation of trusts, and through the transmission inimical to public welfare and should be dealt with by the imposition of income taxes subject to inheritance taxes."

$250,699 Railroad Employes Discharged Since May, 1931

Washington.—The owners and managers of railroads in the United States dismissed nearly 10,000 workers during the month ending April 15, according to figures made public by the Interstate Commerce Commission. The total number employed on April 15 was 1,086,662 compared with 1,096,506 on March 15.

Since the end of May, 1931, the railroad managers have discharged 250,663 employes. According to the Commission's report, the number of employes in May, 1931, was 1,337,321. By April 15, 1932, the number had shrunk to 1,086,662.

When the railroad employes took a voluntary wage cut of 10 per cent last winter it was understood the railroad managers would use some of the earnings "saved" by the reduction to increase employment. Evidently the understanding has been lost in the jungle that fails to save and increase dividends for stockholders and preserve interest for bondowners.

$1,600,000,000 Public Works Bond Issue by Soviet Union

Moscow.—Newspapers of the Soviet Union carried front-page stories urging all citizens to subscribe at least three weeks' salary to the new bond issue of 1,600,000,000 rubles, nominally $1,600,000,000. The articles pointed out that the proceeds of the loan will hasten industrialization and increase the country's productivity.

The new loan brings the sum which the people of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics will have invested in the cause of industrialization to the neighborhood of 8,000,000,000 rubles. The loans represent the means of paying the cost of new construction in addition to the annual budgets, which are met recurring to extra taxation or printing additional money.

$24,275,000 PER MONTH SPENT FOR RELIEF IN 124 CITIES

Destitution Caused by Unemployment Rapidly Increasing, U. S. Children's Bureau Declares.

Washington.—Relief expenditures to keep the destitute in 124 cities alive reached a new high level in 194 cities in March when 985 agencies gave aid amounting to approximately $24,275,000 and gave assistance to more than 1,000,000 families, the Children's Bureau of the U. S. Department of Labor announced in a statement summarizing the latest compilations of relief statistics.

Public Relief Is Largest

Sixty-five per cent of the amount was furnished by taxpayers through public bureaus, leaving only 35 per cent to private charity.

New York City reported expenditures amounting to more than $5,500,000 for the month. In March, 1931, New York the cities of Boston, Buffalo, Philadelphia, Chicago and Detroit disbursed more than $11,000,000.

The value of Federal flour distributed in March was not included in the figures on relief expenditures because the allotments were not made until well toward the end of the month.

1,455,102 Free Meals in Month

"In the month of March, which marked the close of the 1931-32 Winter season," the Children's Bureau survey concluded, "the number of meals served to transient and homeless persons by 167 agencies was 1,455,102, while the number of night's lodgings furnished amounted to 446,406.

Destitution Increases

"Evidence of steadily increasing demands for food and lodging during the period of the depression is shown by records from 61 small cities which reported on the volume of this service in each month from January, 1929, to March, 1932. Increase of 471 per cent in the number of meals served and 260 per cent in the number of nights' lodgings furnished during that period is indicated by these records."